

JOANASSIE IGIU

RECENT SCULPTURE



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JOANASSIE IGIU (1923-1981)

In the last ten years the Cape Dorset artist, Joanassie Igiu, established himself as a talented sculptor with a personal style and his death on November 30, 1981 was a cause for regret among admirers of Inuit art. Joanassie had been active in carving the green stone of his home community until his death and the sculpture featured in this exhibition represents the last of his work. His carvings have been included in a number of exhibitions in the past decade and are held in several major collections of art (see inside back cover). He was married to the respected graphic artist, Kenojuak Ashevak, and there is evidence of his influence in her recent sculpture.

Joanassie tends to concentrate on animal subjects for his carvings, particularly birds and fish. They are presented singly (Fig. 4-5) or in various combinations, such as fish and bird (cover). The pieces range in size from 10 to approximately 50 cm., although an average height or width is 30 cm. A characteristic feature of Joanassie's sculpture is the upstretched head with open mouth. This gives to the works a sense of movement, as do the strong diagonal or vertical lines that are often present. Another distinctive feature of the carvings is the almond-shaped eye-type, carefully carved in the stone.

Joanassie's carvings have many of the stylistic characteristics of the sculpture of Cape Dorset. Surfaces of the green stone are smooth and glossy. Detailing and realism are secondary to a concern for the overall form of the piece. Stylized birds are a very common subject. But there is an individual flavour to his sculpture that can be described as a gentle lyricism. Rounded parts flow together creating works that are organic unities. The spread wings of birds are a series of lobes that are echoed in feet and toes. At times these round, rippling forms remind the viewer of petals and flowers. There is a tranquility and a quiet humour to the sculpture that is most engaging. It is possible to feel a real affection for the gentle, playful animals that have been created by the artist.

Darlene Wight
Canadian Arctic Producers

Cover: 27 x 48 x 18 cm., 1981

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Fig. 1. 27 x 33.5 x 14 cm., 1980



Fig. 2. 39 x 37 x 20 cm., 1981

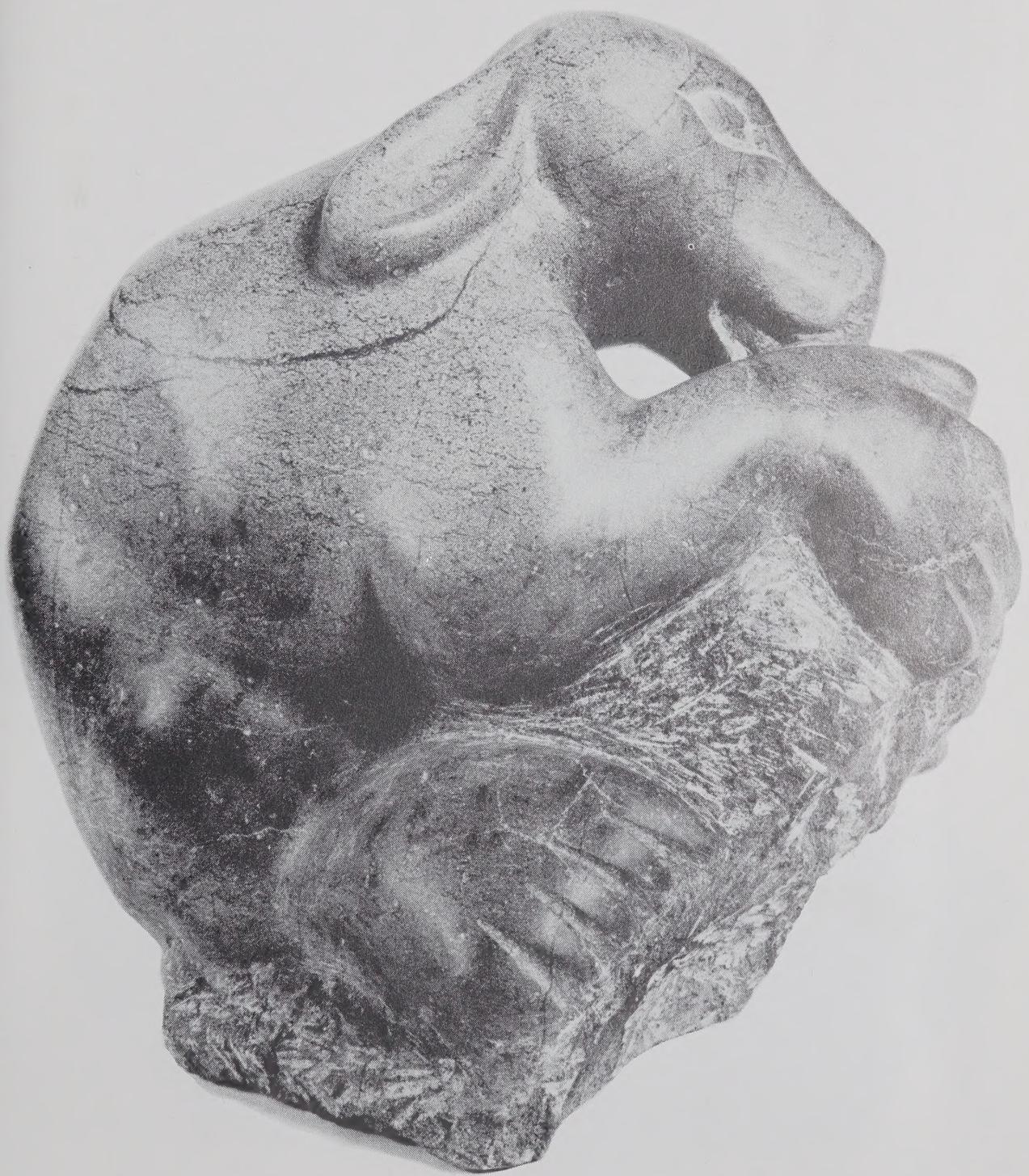


Fig. 3. 31 × 34 × 19 cm., 1978



Fig. 4. 36 × 32 × 24 cm., 1980

JOANASSIE IGIU (JOHNASSIE EEGEEYUK; EGEYUK; IGUI)

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Born: 1923

Died: 1981

Resided in Cape Dorset

Sculptor

EXHIBITIONS:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Feb.-Apr. 1973 | The Bessie Bulman Collection
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg (illustrated catalogue) |
| 1975 | Cape Dorset/Selected Sculpture
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg (illustrated catalogue) |
| Jan.-Mar. 1980 | Cape Dorset
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg (illustrated catalogue) |
| Sept.-Oct. 1980 | Cape Dorset Sculpture
Robertson Galleries, Ottawa |
| Nov.-Dec. 1980 | Cape Dorset Sculpture
Collectors' Choice, Saskatoon |
| Oct. 1981 | Cape Dorset Sculpture
Franz Bader, Washington, D.C. |

COLLECTIONS:

Alma Houston, Lunenberg, Nova Scotia

Bessie Bulman Collection, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg

Twomey Collection, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg

Museum of Man, Ottawa

University of Alberta Library



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Fig. 5. 31.5 x 37 x 22 cm., 1980



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